



# BIBLE BAPTISM

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Bible Baptism

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Matthew 28:18-20

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2002

There are two common misconceptions people have about baptism: that it is either necessary for our salvation, or that it is not important at all.

Adrian Rogers says, "This is a church, not a club; we don't make up our rules as we go along. Jesus has all authority, and He is the one who tells us about baptism."

In order to grow as Christians, we cannot minimize what the Bible has emphasized, which is starting right with biblical baptism.

Matthew 28:18-20 says, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

## **First, we must recognize the biblical method of baptism.**

In Mark 1:9-10, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The word used, "baptizo," means, "to immerse." Therefore, the biblical method of baptism is by immersion: placing a person underwater and bringing him out.

## **Second, we must be sure of the meaning of baptism.**

Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as well as our death, burial, and resurrection with Him. It is a picture of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

## **Finally, there are three motives to be baptized:**

1. It proclaims our commitment to Jesus.
2. It portrays our conversion; it is our way of testifying.
3. It is a command from God that we must obey.

While baptism is not necessary for our salvation, it is necessary for our obedience. It shows that we belong to Jesus Christ.

## **Life Application**

Baptism is not a suggestion; it is a command from Scripture. Have you come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Have you been baptized?



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In Matthew 28, the Lord Jesus Christ gave the church her marching orders, known as the Great Commission.
  - i) Sadly, what is known as the Great Commission is often the great omission.
- b) Jesus began His brief three year public ministry by being baptized by John in the Jordan River and concluded it by commanding baptism.
- c) Matthew 28:18-20
  - i) The One Who has all authority and is with us to the end of the age is still speaking today, commanding the same thing; He has not changed.
- d) We are to lead people to Christ, baptize them and teach them to observe everything that Jesus commanded us. That is what God's Word says.
- e) All denominations need to get rid of any so-called doctrines we may have and all of us need to come back to Bible doctrine.
  - i) The church is not a club, and we don't make up our rules as we go along.
- f) Jesus has all authority, and we need to understand and heed what He tells us in His Word about baptism.

## 2) THE BIBLICAL METHOD OF BAPTISM

- a) Mark 1:9-10
  - i) The distance Jesus traveled to be baptized was approximately 60 miles one way.
  - ii) Jesus was not baptized near the Jordan River, not by the Jordan, but in the Jordan.
  - iii) The dove in this passage symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
  - iv) The Biblical method of baptism is immersion.
- b) John 3:23
  - i) According to this passage, the reason John was baptizing in this particular spot was because there was much water there.
    - (1) John did not baptize in this location because it was convenient.
    - (2) Bible baptism is not necessarily easy.
    - (3) It takes a lot of water in order to baptize.
      - (a) To baptize is to immerse.
  - ii) The Greek word used in this passage for "baptized" literally means "immersed."
    - (1) The Greek word used in this passage, "baptizo," means "to dip, to submerge, to immerse."
    - (2) The Greek word "rantizo" means "to sprinkle."
    - (3) The Greek word "luo" means "to pour."
- c) In the early years of the church, all Christians baptized by immersion.
  - i) You can find great European cathedrals built before the 13th century which have baptisteries, supporting the biblical method of baptism by immersion.



### 3) THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF BAPTISM

- a) The method and the meaning of baptism are inextricably interwoven.
  - i) The method is necessary to the meaning.
  - ii) The meaning dictates the method.
- b) The Biblical meaning of baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) Baptism is an important picture of the Gospel.
  - i) Romans 6:4-7
    - (1) Baptism is a burial.
    - (2) Baptism pictures our old self being crucified with Jesus.
    - (3) Baptism pictures the Gospel; the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
      - (a) 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
  - ii) Satan would like to destroy this picture of the Gospel message; he would like to remove it from our churches.
  - iii) God wants the message of the Gospel to be clear and plain, and that's why baptism pictures what Jesus did to save us.
  - iv) Baptism shows that we believe in the Gospel message of Jesus' death for our sins, His burial and resurrection; and it shows that we identify ourselves with the Gospel.
    - (1) Romans 6:5
      - (a) Baptism is a picture of our death.
      - (b) When we go under the water, that is in the likeness of death showing that our old self has died.
      - (c) And it shows how Jesus died for us, taking our place upon that cross; His death had our name on it.
      - (d) To be baptized before you're saved is like having your funeral before you die.
- d) In the Bible, baptism always follows salvation.
  - i) Acts 2:41
    - (1) We must receive the Word before we are baptized.
  - ii) Acts 10:46-47
    - (1) During this time, the mark that a Gentile had received the Holy Ghost was the ability to speak in different languages; ones he did not already know.
  - iii) Acts 16:31-33
    - (1) "And thy house" does not mean that they will be saved because he believes, but that if they believe they can be saved as he was saved.
  - iv) In Scripture, baptism always follows belief, never be baptized then believe.
- e) Baptism also pictures our resurrection with Christ:
  - i) Romans 6:4
    - (1) Symbolically, when we are baptized, we are going into a liquid tomb.
    - (2) Our old self dies with Jesus.
    - (3) Jesus' death had our name on it.
      - (a) Jesus died for me.
      - (b) I died with Him.
      - (c) Baptism acknowledges that we believe this.
- f) Baptism also pictures that we may one day die physically if Jesus tarries.
  - i) Just as we come out of the water after baptism, so shall we come out of the grave at the resurrection.



- g) Baptism pictures Calvary because we died with Him to our old life.
- h) Baptism pictures Easter because we rose with Him to walk in newness of life.
- i) Baptism pictures the Second Coming because one day, we will be raised from the grave to live with Him in a resurrected body.

#### 4) THE BIBLICAL MOTIVES OF BAPTISM

- a) There are three Biblical motives of baptism. Why be baptized?
  - (1) There is a Master to confess: the Lord Jesus Christ
  - (2) Matthew 28:19
    - (a) We are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.
    - (b) We take the name of Jesus; He is now our Master.
  - (3) Romans 6:6
    - (a) You become a new person with a new Master: Jesus.
  - (4) Baptism is our way of saying, "I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I thank God for what He did for me on that cross."
    - (a) Just as a wedding ring shows that you belong to your spouse, baptism shows that you belong to Jesus.
    - (b) Baptism doesn't make you a Christian, but it advertises or shows that you are a Christian.
- i) There is a message to convey: the Gospel
  - (1) Anyone who gets baptized is preaching the Gospel.
  - (2) Every baptism service can bring conviction to the hearts of people who see the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord portrayed.
  - (3) In baptism, people can see what happened when you were saved and what Christ did, leading them to conclude: "I need a Savior. I need someone to have died for me. I need a new life. I need what that pictures."
- ii) There is a mandate to complete: the Great Commission
  - (1) Matthew 28:19-20
  - (2) We are to say, "Yes, Lord, yes."
  - (3) We must remember that Jesus Christ has all authority in Heaven and on Earth, and He has commanded us (not suggested) that we go and teach, making disciples and baptizing.

#### 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is necessary for obedience; and obedience is necessary for joy and fruitfulness in the Christian life.
  - i) Matthew 25:29
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



# Bible Baptism

**SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 28:18-20**

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Would you be finding Matthew chapter 28, very familiar verses, verses 19 and 20? This has been called the Great Commission, but alas and alack, many times it is the great omission. We need to find out what the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the church when He gave the church her marching orders, her Great Commission. Now let me tell you about the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Jesus had a brief ministry, little more than three years, that's all, public ministry. How did Jesus begin His ministry? Jesus began His ministry by being baptized by John in the River Jordan. How did Jesus conclude His ministry? Jesus concluded His ministry by commanding baptism.

Now notice the Scripture right here, Matthew chapter 28 verse 18 to 20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'All power,'" and the word power literally means authority, "is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations," that literally means disciple all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe," how many things? All things. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have," requested you? Is that what it says, requested you? Suggested to you? "Teaching them to observe," how many things? All things, "Whatsoever I have commanded you." Now who said this? The one who says, "All authority is given unto Me." Now folks, when you come to something like this, the only thing you can reasonably say is, "I'll say yes, Lord, yes."

Now look at it again, "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," that is literally the end of the age. He is here today, He is still speaking, He is still saying the same thing, He has not changed, there's no stutter, no stammer, no apology, no equivocation. It is there in the Word of God. We're to lead people to Christ, we're to baptize them and teach them to observe everything He has commanded us. Now that's what the Word of God says. That is black print on white paper.

I want to talk to you about baptism today, not Baptist baptism. Folks, I'm not one whit interested in Baptist baptism. If we have any Baptist doctrine, we need to get rid of it. And Presbyterians need to get rid of Presbyterian doctrine, and Methodists need to get rid of Methodist doctrine, and Episcopalians need to get rid of Episcopalian doctrine, and Assemblies of God need to get rid of Assembly of God doctrine, and Catholics need to get rid of Catholic doctrine, and all of us need to come back to Bible doctrine, is that not right? I mean, we need to understand what does the Bible say? This is a church, not a club. And we don't make up our rules as we go along. Jesus has all authority. He is the one who tells us about baptism.

Now, what I want to do is to ask you to look, therefore, into the Word of God. Now if I tell you something that's not in the Word of God, challenge me on it. If I tell you something that is in the Word of God, then it's not me that you're listening to, really, it is God. I hope that makes sense to you.

Let's talk about **the biblical method of baptism**. What is the method of baptism? Put in your margin Mark chapter 1 verses 9 and 10, and we're going to find out how the Lord Jesus Christ, our example, was



baptized. It says here, "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan." Now do you know how far that was? Do you know how far that was? That was 60 miles one way to be baptized. You say, "Well, it's a little inconvenient for me to be baptized; if I got baptized I'd mess up a \$20 hairdo." Oh? Jesus came 60 miles from Nazareth to Jordan and was baptized of John in Jordan. Not near Jordan, not by Jordan, but in Jordan. Jordan was a river, "And straightway coming up out of the water," now if He came up out of the water, where was He? Down in the water, "He saw the Heavens open and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." It is obvious that Jesus was baptized by immersion.

"Why did Jesus come all the way out to Jordan? Why was John baptizing in Jordan?" Good question, I'm glad you asked it. Now let me see if I can answer that question. Turn to John chapter 3 and verse 23. Turn to it, John chapter 3 and verse 23, and you're going to find out why John was baptizing in this particular spot. And the Bible says, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because," it was so beautiful there, because it was so convenient. That isn't what it says, folks. Listen, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized." Literally, the word baptized, as you've heard, means immersed. The reason that John went out there to the River Jordan is not for the scenery, not for the convenience. Folks, it just takes a lot of water to baptize. If I baptized the way some people call baptism, I could baptize everybody in this auditorium with a washtub full and have plenty left over. But, no, baptism takes a lot of water. Jordan was a muddy old river and it wasn't convenient, but there was water there.

I went to Kenya in East Africa, went out, I mean past ostrich and zebras and wildebeests and gazelles, out to the back side where this noble tribe of Maasai warriors were. I went out there with missionary Jim Hooten. He was leading those Maasai warriors to Jesus Christ. How was he going to baptize them out there? They took a shovel and dug a grave, lined that grave with visqueen, and then on his Land Rover he hauled in water and filled that grave with water, and those Maasai warriors were laid in that muddy water, in that grave, symbolizing that they had died with the Lord Jesus Christ and were buried with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not easy to baptize. I remember the first person I ever baptized. Her name was Willie. I led Willie to Christ in the first little church I pastored in Fellsmere, Florida. I went over to see Willie on a Saturday night and witnessed to her. She's a lovely lady. But she says, "Pastor, I want to be saved, but I just don't know how to believe, I don't know how to trust." I said, "Well, just trust Him." She said, "Well I want to, but how do you do it?" "I don't know how to tell you to do it, just do it. Trust the Lord." She said, "Oh, I want to," but she said, "I just can't trust." I didn't know what to tell her. I said, "Willie, I'm going to pray for you. I'll see you tomorrow. You just tell the Lord. Ask Him to help you to trust Him."

The next day she came, her face was like the noonday sun. She said, "Oh, Pastor, God saved me last night, God saved me last night." She came forward. I was a young preacher, only 19 years of age pastoring a church. I didn't have any business pastoring that church except that God had called me and told me to do it. I mean, as far as experience, I didn't know how to baptize. I didn't even know where to lay hold of a person to baptize them. I didn't know how to do it, you know, I paid no attention to my pastor when he was baptizing. But we didn't have a baptistery in that church. Folks we didn't have running water in that church, much less a baptistery. And we didn't have a restroom in that church. I mean, we had a floor and walls and a two-by-eight to sit on, a two-by-eight to lean back on, put together with an iron bracket, but God was in that church, that little church out there on the edge of the Everglades in Florida.



We had a canal out there called Lateral A canal, where they drained those sugar cane fields. We went out to Lateral A canal and I went out there, and our little church gathered. I went down that slippery, muddy bank, and Willie followed me down there. The water was about waist deep in Lateral A canal and, I remember it was cold for Florida, it was cold. I can still hear it right now. When Willie's feet hit that water, she said, "Tsssssss!" It was cold. It wasn't like we have today, folks. I mean there were wiggle-tails and everything else in that water, pollywogs and maybe a moccasin or two.

But we went out there, and I laid that gracious lady back in that water and raised her up; I'll never forget it. Why do that? It'd be so much easier to put a little water on her head. Why do that? Why? Because, the same reason that Jesus went all the way to Jordan, "Because there was much water there." We had to find a place where there was water.

One time in my church in Florida I'd announced a baptismal service, and when I got there, the baptistery was empty. We had a pipe about as big as my thumb that filled that baptistery. Folks, it took forever and then a day to fill that baptistery, and I looked in, and the janitor had forgot to turn it on. I said, "What're we going to do. We had people to come from out of town to see folks baptized." I had an idea, I believe divine inspiration. I called the fire department. I said, "I've got an emergency. Send a pumper truck over." And you know, they did it. And people thought the church was on fire, they saw that big fire engine out there and that hose running in there. We filled that baptistery up lickety-split with that big pumper truck, and I baptized those people.

Now why go to all that trouble? Why, when we'd built this building, did we build this beautiful baptistery? Because Jesus said, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Because, it's not easy, but it is glorious, it is wonderful. We're not looking for a convenient religion. Listen, folks, it's not a matter of convenience. Let's just find out what the Bible says. Bible baptism is by immersion.

Now, some people want to make it easy. You know churches are getting so lax today I expect to see some churches start taking members in on the telephone and baptizing their photographs. Baptism is by immersion. The very word baptism is basically an untranslated Greek word. Baptizo means to dip, to submerge, to immerse. Rantizo means to sprinkle, luo means to pour, but God's Word that He uses, He says, "Take them and baptize them." If you were to take the word baptize, it is a word that is transliterated, taken out of the Greek language, put into the English language, but the word literally, if it's translated, means to dip, to immerse. That's what the word means. And did you know in the early years all Christians baptized the way we baptize, by immersion.

As a matter of fact, if you'll go to Europe and you look in some of the great cathedrals that were built before the 13th century, you'll find out they had baptisteries like we have in our Baptist churches. I have gone and stood in some of those baptisteries in these old cathedrals because in the early years everybody baptized just like the Bible teaches us to baptize. And so, that is the biblical method of baptism. It is by immersion. That's the method.

Now, the method and **the meaning of baptism** are inextricably interwoven. The reason that the method is so important is the method is necessary to the meaning. And the meaning dictates the method. Now we've talked about the method, and we've seen that the Lord Jesus was baptized by immersion by John in the River Jordan, but now, what is the meaning? Well, the meaning is; **baptism pictures the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**



Now take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 6 with me, if you will please, Romans chapter 6. And look if you will in verses 4 through 7, "Therefore we are," what? "Buried with Him by baptism into death." Now, folks, baptism is a burial, "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." So the Bible says, "Knowing this," verse 6, "that our old man," now watch it, "our old man," the old Adrian, that rascal, "is crucified with Him," that is, with Jesus, "that the body of sin might be destroyed," that's the old man I used to be, "that henceforth we should not serve sin. For He that is dead is freed from sin."

You see, what does baptism picture? Baptism pictures the Gospel. What is the Gospel? First Corinthians 15 verses 3 and 4 tells us the Gospel is this, "That Christ died for our sins, He was buried, He was raised again the third day." Folks, that's the Gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Do you understand that? Do you understand that? That is the Gospel! What does baptism picture? It pictures the Gospel. Romans 6:4, "We are buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Can you understand why the devil would like to destroy that symbolism? If there's one message, if you were the devil, what one message would you want to take out of the church? The Gospel. What one message would you want to obliterate? The Gospel. What one message would you want to make sure was not seen over and over again? It is the Gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now some people say, "Well, the method is not important. It only pictures salvation. Any picture will do." Suppose you'd never seen my wife, Joyce, and you say, "Adrian, you have a picture of Joyce?" I say, "I sure do," and I pulled out a picture, and there's a race car or there's a waterfall or there's a coffee table. And you say, "That's Joyce?" I say, "Well, any picture will do, doesn't make any difference." "Well, you know, I didn't know your wife looked like a race car, I didn't know she looked like a waterfall; I didn't know she looked like a coffee table." Well, any picture will do. Hey, folks, baptism is a picture of a death, a burial, and a resurrection. I mean, God wants it to be clear, God wants it to be plain, and that's the reason that we picture what Jesus did to save us. The devil would love to remove that from our church, but we want to keep it there.

"Living, He loved me, dying, He saved me, buried, He carried my sins far away. Rising, He justified freely forever. One day He's coming, O glorious day."

That's in baptism, my folks. It shows, first of all, that we believe that, and we identify ourselves with it. Look in verse 5. You're in Romans chapter 6, look in verse 5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death." When I go under the water, when I'm baptized, that says I am in the likeness of death. I die, the old Adrian died. Because when Jesus died, He died for me. When I trust Him, His death has my name on it. He died my death, He took my place upon that cross, so my death with the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured in baptism. That's the reason if you were baptized before you got saved, hey, folks, you weren't really baptized. To be baptized before you're saved is like having your funeral before you die. Baptism is a picture of your death.

Always in the Bible, always baptism follows salvation, dying to the old way. Just put these Scriptures down. Acts chapter 2 verse 41, "Then they that received His Word were baptized." You see, you've got to receive the Word before you're baptized. That's why we don't baptize little infants.



Acts 10 verses 46 and 47, “For they heard them speak with tongues and magnified God. Then answered Peter, ‘Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?’” In this transitional period, the mark that these Gentile believers had received the Holy Ghost was the ability to speak in foreign languages. It was a supernatural gift of God to confirm that the Gospel was going to the Gentiles. When Peter saw that, he said, “Why these can be baptized also because they have received the Holy Ghost.” It’s necessary that you be saved and receive the Holy Spirit before you’re baptized.

Acts chapter 16 verses 31 through 33, Paul and Silas were in prison, there was an earthquake, the jailer came to them and wanted to know what he had to do to be saved. And in Acts 16 verse 31, “And they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.’” That doesn’t mean they’d be saved because he believed; it means if they believe they’ll be saved just like you’re saved. “‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.’ And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway.”

Now in all of these Scriptures I’m showing you is that baptism follows belief. The Bible never says, “Be baptized and believe,” but vice versa, “Believe and be baptized.” Because real baptism follows real salvation. It pictures what? Our death, Romans 6 verse 5. But it also pictures our resurrection with Jesus. Look in Romans 6 verse 4, “Therefore we’re buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even we also should walk in newness of life.”

So when I went down beneath that water, that was a liquid tomb. The old Adrian died with Jesus. The old Adrian is buried. It was a funeral. The only mourner there was the devil. He hated to see me die. I am buried with Jesus. His death had my name on it. He died for me, I died with Him. Baptism says I believe that. The old man is dead and this world is crucified to me, and I’m dead to this old world. And then the Bible says, “That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Goodbye, old world! Goodbye, old man! Hello, new world. Hello, Jesus. Hello resurrection life. And that’s what it’s about. When Jesus died, I died. When He arose, I arose. He did that for me and I did that with Him.

But it also pictures the fact that one of these days, one of these days I’m going to die physically if Jesus tarries. And they’re going to lay me in the grave. I don’t want to invite you to my funeral. It won’t be polite to invite you to something when I won’t be there. I’ll be up in Heaven looking down on you, but my body will be in the good clean earth until the trumpet sounds and the resurrection comes, and just like I came up out of that baptistery when I was baptized, I’m coming up out of that grave. I mean, my body is going to be raised. And you see, what does baptism picture? Friend, it pictures Calvary because we died with Him. It pictures Easter because we rose with Him. It pictures the Second Coming because one of these days we’re going to be raised up out of that grave to live with the Lord Jesus Christ in a resurrected body. Don’t you think the devil would like to take that picture out of the church? Now folks, that’s the biblical meaning of baptism, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now here’s the last thing. Not only the method and not only the meaning, but the method and the meaning now are tied to **the motive**. Why be baptized? Three reasons. First of all, **there is a Master to confess, the Lord Jesus**. We are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We take the name of Jesus. He is now our Master. The Bible teaches, look if you will in Romans 6 verse



6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." You see, we have a new Master, a new life. I'm a new man with a new Master. I'm identifying myself with Christ. Do you know what baptism is? Baptism is your way of saying, "I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I thank God for what He did for me on that cross."

You see that thing on my finger? That's the only piece of jewelry I have except for this watch I'm wearing and I wouldn't call that jewelry. But that's it right there. Do you know what that is? That's a wedding ring. You know who gave me that? Sweet Joyce. You know why I wear that? Because I love her. And I'm not ashamed of her. I want everybody to know that I belong to one woman. Her name is Joyce. Now this ring doesn't make me married. I could be married and not have a wedding ring. Or I could go down to the dime store and buy one and not be married. She didn't buy this in the dime store. I don't think, I'll ask her. But now listen, folks, listen. What does that mean? That means I belong to Joyce! What does baptism mean? Means I belong to Jesus. It doesn't make me a Christian, it shows I'm a Christian. Friend, there is a Master to confess.

A little boy got saved in the children's church and they said, "Go over to big church and tell them you've been saved and you need to get baptized." He didn't understand baptism. He went to the big church. He told the pastor, "I've been saved, I need to get advertised." That's it, folks, you're getting advertised.

Now there is a Master to confess. Listen, secondly, **there is a message to convey**. Did you know that every time when someone gets baptized you're preaching the Gospel? Every time, when you get baptized, anybody who gets baptized, he's preaching the Gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A Master to confess, a message to convey; it shows what happened when you got saved, it shows what Jesus did. Many times I've seen people get under conviction of sin and get saved because of a baptismal service. The very things that baptism pictures is what brings conviction in the hearts of people, and they say, "I need a Savior. I need somebody to have died for me. I need a new life. I need what that pictures."

But last of all, friend, **it is a mandate to complete**. Now listen, go back again. It is a Master to confess, it is a message to convey, but it is a mandate to complete. Jesus said in Matthew 28 verses 19 and 20, "Go therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," now watch this, "teaching them to obey all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "Whatsoever I have commanded you." What is your response to that? "I'll say yes, Lord, yes." Now some of you, if you've never yet received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, what you need to do today is you need to say, "Listen, I'm trusting Jesus as my personal Savior and Lord," and get baptized.

Others of you, you may be church members, but if you would be judgment-day honest you would say, "Pastor, I was baptized before I really understood the Gospel. I had my funeral before I died, and I want to get the order right. I want believer's baptism." The Bible says, "Believe and be baptized." And so you want to come and say, "I know I'm saved, I'm not coming to be saved, but I want to come and get this, this thing right."

You say, "Well, Pastor, what difference does it make? It's not necessary for salvation." It's necessary for obedience, and obedience is necessary for joy and fruitfulness in the Christian life. Have you ever been reading a passage of Scripture and you say, "Lord, I just don't understand that, Lord, show me what that means, please, Lord, I want to understand what that means." God says, "Why should I show you what



that means? Why should I show you what this means when I've already showed you something else and you won't do that? So why should I show you what, why should I show you this if I've already shown you that and you won't obey that?" Friend, listen, the way to understand the part of the Scripture you don't understand is to obey the part you do understand. "To Him that hath shall be given." Just begin to obey, "There's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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